



## Commonwealth of Kentucky Public Protection Cabinet

Steve Beshear, Governor

Ambrose Wilson IV, Secretary

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **State Fire Marshal reminds Kentuckians of fire prevention efforts during Building Safety Month** *What can you do to prevent fires in your home?*

**Frankfort, Ky.** (May 6, 2015) – Kentucky State Fire Marshal Bill Swope understands that one way to prevent fire fatalities is through public education efforts in partnership with local fire departments across the state.

Gov. Steve Beshear has proclaimed May as “Building Safety Month” with one week dedicated to fire safety and prevention.

“The Division of Fire Prevention takes every opportunity to remind Kentuckians that there are actions families can take to practice fire safety,” Swope said. “Building Safety Month gives us another chance to reach out to our friends and neighbors and put fire safety in front of them. Prevention is our best defense.”

According to the United States Fire Administration (USFA), the No. 1 cause of preventable home fire deaths is smoking. In fact, Kentucky ranks ninth in the United States for fire deaths and is the nation's leader in smoking-related deaths. One-third of all fire deaths in Kentucky are attributed to smoking. Swope says that if you smoke, do not leave burning cigarettes, cigars or pipes unattended; if you feel drowsy, put it out immediately; use deep ashtrays; and, never smoke in bed.

More than 2,500 Americans died in home fires last year, according to the USFA. In most cases, the home did not have a working smoke alarm.

Swope says there are two things families can do together to increase chances of escaping a burning home: making sure homes or apartments have working smoke detectors and an escape plan.

“Install and maintain a smoke alarm on every level of your home and near each bedroom. In addition, replace the battery each year,” said Swope. “These early-sounding alarms can give you extra seconds to get out of the house.”

Swope also encourages families to make an escape plan that marks two ways out from every room and to also designate a meeting place outside of the home. “Make sure everyone in the home practices it and once out of a burning house, stay out,” he said.

Other fire prevention safety tips can be found on the Division of Fire Prevention website at <http://dhbc.ky.gov/sfm/Pages/Safety.aspx>.

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